

## **Georgia Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (CAPTA) Panels**

*Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.*

### Georgia's CAPTA Panels

With each reauthorization, including the most recent in 2019, CAPTA has evolved in response to the child welfare climate, shifting its focus to safety due to concerns over child fatalities in open cases, children languishing in care, and children returned home to unsafe environments, as well as a desire to increase accountability in the child protective services (CPS) system. To be eligible for a CAPTA state grant, a state must comply with specific federal requirements and guidelines related to its child welfare policies, practices, and laws.

The CAPTA reauthorization of 1996 established citizen review panels (CAPTA Panels) as a requirement for all states receiving a CAPTA state grant. In 2006, three existing committees were officially designated to serve as Georgia's CAPTA Panels: the Children's Justice Act Task Force (Task Force), the Child Protective Services Advisory Committee (CPSAC), and the Georgia Child Fatality Review Panel (CFRP). Co-chairs (Chair and Vice-chair for CFRP) provide leadership for their respective Panels.

#### Children's Justice Act Task Force (Task Force)

States eligible for a CAPTA state grant are also eligible for a Children's Justice Act state grant for the improvement of the investigation, prosecution, and judicial handling of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly child sexual abuse and exploitation, in a manner that limits additional trauma to the child victim. This also includes the handling of child fatality cases where child abuse or neglect is suspected and cases involving children with disabilities or serious health problems who are the victims of abuse and neglect.

As a CJA grant recipient, states are required to establish and maintain a multi-disciplinary task force on children's justice composed of representatives from selected disciplines involved in the assessment and investigation of cases of child abuse and neglect. The Task Force serves a dual role as a CAPTA Panel and a task force on children's justice.

#### Child Protective Advisory Committee (CPSAC)

The CPSAC serves solely as a CAPTA Panel and although the priorities of the CPSAC are rooted in child abuse prevention and early intervention, their interests span the full spectrum of family involvement in the child protection, including foster care and adoptions. This Panel's recommendations and advocacy efforts have addressed caseworker training and policy/practice associated with at risk families with children ages 0-5; the development and implementation of the state's differential/safety response system; and most recently, workforce recruitment and retention – training, supervision, compensation, caseloads, and worker safety. More recent interests have included foster parent training, relative caregiver placements, and assessment of child safety from initial report to placement in foster care.

#### Child Fatality Review Panel (CFRP)

The CFRP serves as both a CAPTA Panel and a state-legislated body charged with reviewing the circumstances in all child deaths and identifying opportunities for prevention. The membership of the CFRP is set forth in state law, O.C.G.A. § 19-15-4 and is supported by staff under the supervision of the Georgia Bureau of Investigations. The staff review and monitor the work of the 159 county -based child fatality review committees, analyze results, and develop recommendations based on their findings and the issues raised by the local committees and CFRP members. In 2010, a CAPTA Maltreatment Committee was established to address additional obligations of the CFRP as a CAPTA citizen review panel, including its CAPTA Panel obligations related to maltreatment-related deaths.